



Reduce the Risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome



CALIFORNIA
SIDS
PROGRAM
SUDDEN INFANT
DEATH SYNDROME
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH SERVICES MCHH

Sudden Infant
Death Syndrome

What is SIDS?

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the sudden and unexplained death of an infant under one year of age. It is only determined after the completion of an autopsy, a death scene investigation, and a review of the case history.

SIDS, sometimes known as crib death, is the major cause of death in babies from one month to one year of age.

- ★ In the United States, SIDS takes the lives of thousands of babies every year.
- ★ A few hundred babies die of SIDS each year in California.



★ Important facts about SIDS

Most SIDS deaths happen by six months of age. More boys than girls are victims, and most deaths occur during the fall, winter and early spring months. The death is sudden and unpredictable; in most cases the baby seems healthy. Death occurs quickly during sleep.

After more than 30 years of research, scientists still cannot find the definite cause or causes for SIDS. There is no way to predict or prevent SIDS. This brochure describes the recommended infant care practices that have been shown to significantly lower the risk of SIDS.

What You Can Do To Help Reduce the Risk of SIDS

★ Place your baby on their back to sleep

One of the most important things you can do to help reduce the risk of SIDS is to place your baby on his or her back to sleep. Do this when the baby is put down for a nap or to bed for the night.

- ★ Babies able to roll over on their own should not be forced to stay on their back.
- ★ Babies should be placed in a variety of positions while awake. Tummy time helps your baby's neck and shoulder muscles grow stronger.

★ Smoke-free

Create a smoke-free zone around your baby. Avoid smoking when you are pregnant and after your baby is born. Babies exposed to smoke have an increased risk of SIDS. In addition, babies and young children have more colds and other diseases when around smoke.

★ Bedding

Make sure your baby sleeps on a firm mattress or other firm surface. Remove stuffed toys, bumper pads and pillows from the crib.



- ★ Do not use fluffy blankets or comforters under the baby or put your baby to sleep on a waterbed, couch, sheepskin, pillow or other soft materials.

- ★ Make sure your baby's head and face stay uncovered during sleep.

★ Temperature

Babies should be kept warm, not hot. Dress your baby with the same amount of clothing that you are wearing. Keep the temperature in your baby's room so that it feels comfortable to you.

★ Medical Care

A good start for any baby is for mothers to receive early and regular prenatal care. It is also important to your baby's well being not to use any alcohol or drugs while pregnant. Your baby needs regular checkups and immunizations. If your baby seems sick, call your doctor or clinic right away.

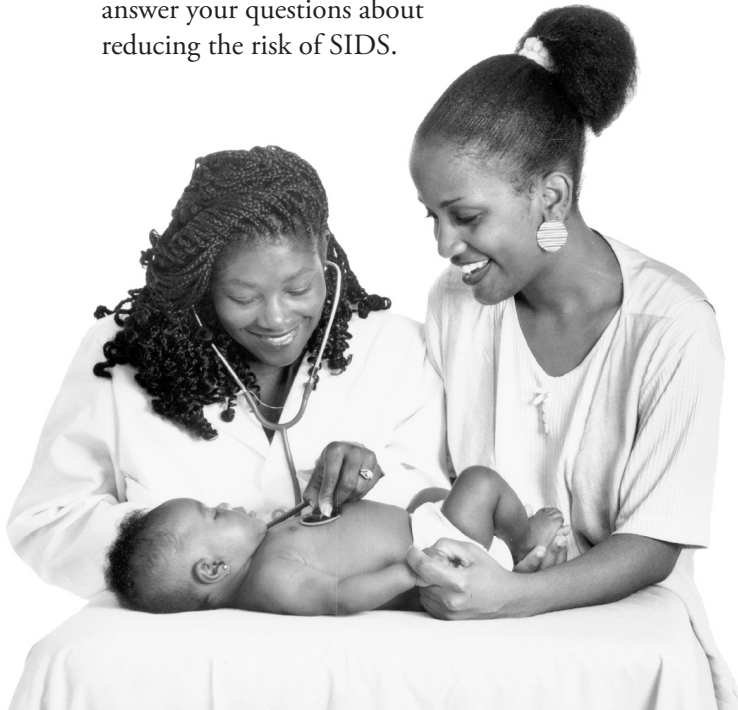
★ Breastfeeding

You should breastfeed your baby, it's the best choice. Breast milk helps to keep your baby healthy. Studies have shown that breastfeeding may reduce the risk of SIDS.

Ask Your Doctor or Nurse

Babies should sleep on their back. Some mothers worry that babies sleeping on their back may choke on spit-up or vomit during sleep. There is no evidence that sleeping on the back causes choking. Millions of babies around the world sleep on their back. A few babies have health conditions that might require them to sleep on their tummy.

- ★ Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have questions about your baby's sleep position or health.
- ★ Your doctor or nurse can also answer your questions about reducing the risk of SIDS.



★ Enjoy your baby!

Remember, most babies are born healthy and most stay that way. Don't let the fear of SIDS spoil your enjoyment of having a new baby.

Various photos courtesy of the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation



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